

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 043233
ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY CTF: JEKARKASHIAN:NWH

APPROVED BY CTF: AMB. HECK

ARA/AND - MS. PATTERSON

ARA - MR. LUERS

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S/S-AOTTO

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 043233

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

AGS: PINS

SUBJECT: KIDNAPPING OF PCV STARR

REFS: (A) BOGOTA 1711; (B) BOGOTA 1733

1. IN ORDER TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES RAISED BOGOTA'S 1711 AND MORE SPECIFICALLY IN BOGOTA'S 1733, TASK FORCE WISHES TO REITERATE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING PEACE CORPS PUBLICLY OUT IN FRONT IN THIS SITUATION. IT IS PRECISELY THE PEACE CORPS IMAGE WHICH ENHANCES THE PROSPECTS FOR STARR'S SAFETY.

2. WE FULLY APPRECIATE THAT WE CANNOT CONTROL FARC'S
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CHOICE OF WHO WILL RECEIVE A DEMAND. HOWEVER, WE RETAIN THE OPTION OF DEFLECTING THE DEMAND TO A MORE APPROPRIATE RECIPIENT. THE UNDERLYING PREMISE OF US POLICY ON THIS SUBJECT DICTATES THAT ANY DEMAND WHICH MAY BE MADE ON THE EMBASSY OR ON THE PEACE CORPS BE DIRECTED TO THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT SINCE WE HOLD IT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL AMERICAN CITIZENS WITHIN ITS JURISDICTION.

THEREFORE, UNDER NO REPEAT NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD THE EMBASSY ALLOW ITSELF TO BE PLACED IN THE POSITION OF NEGOTIATING WITH THE FARC.

3. THE EMBASSY SHOULD IMMEDIATELY COMMUNICATE TO THE COLOMBIAN AUTHORITIES ITS INTENTION AND THAT OF THE PEACE CORPS TO TURN OVER TO THE GOC ANY RANSOM OR OTHER DEMANDS RECEIVED FOR STARR'S RELEASE. THAT POLICY SHOULD BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD BY THE GOC AUTHORITIES AND BY THE KIDNAPPERS IF THE NATURE OF THE CONTACT PERMITS. IF NECESSARY, AN APPROPRIATE MEANS WILL HAVE TO BE FOUND TO MAKE THE FACT KNOWN TO THE KIDNAPPERS.

4. ONCE THE HOST GOVERNMENT HAS ASSUMED THE RESPONSIBILITY OF DEALING WITH THE RANSOM OR OTHER DEMANDS WE CAN WORK OUT WHATEVER ARRANGEMENTS ARE REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE OUR OBJECTIVE OF SECURING STARR'S SAFE RELEASE WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE NO-RANSOM POLICY WHICH IS DESIGNED TO PROTECT OTHER AMERICANS INCLUDING P.C. VOLUNTEERS FROM FUTURE KIDNAPPINGS.

5. WE WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING ASAP INITIAL GOC REACTION TO OPERATIVE PORTIONS PARAS. 3 AND 4 ABOVE, TOGETHER WITH EMBASSY'S ASSESSMENT OF HOW GOC IS LIKELY TO DEAL WITH RANSOM OR OTHER DEMANDS FROM FARC IN EXCHANGE FOR STARR'S SAFE RELEASE. ARE THERE ANY POLICY OR LEGISLATIVE CONSTRAINTS ON GOC'S FREEDOM OF ACTION IN SUCH MATTERS?

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Message Attributes

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